

# Raising Good Kids Without Hitting

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Center for Effective Discipline / EPOCH-USA  
(End Physical Punishment of Children)  
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## Ten Reasons for NOT Hitting Children

1. Physical punishment increases the risk of child abuse. It is easy to hit too hard and cause injuries like bruises, broken bones, welts, and nerve damage.
2. Physical punishment erodes trust between a parent and a child.
3. Physical punishment, when administered regularly, is related to a worsening of behavior rather than an improvement in behavior. It increases antisocial behavior such as lying, stealing, cheating, bullying, assaulting siblings or peers, and lack of remorse for wrongdoing.
4. Hitting children transmits a pro-violence attitude. It teaches that it is acceptable to hit persons who are smaller and weaker.
5. Fear is not an effective way of teaching appropriate behavior. Fear may lead children to obey only when the person who hits them is nearby.
6. Children who are frequently hit often grow up with childhood memories of anger and resentment.
7. Children are often hit for behavior which is not “bad” behavior but rather behavior which is related to needs for attention, nutrition, sleep, and exploring.
8. Hitting a child for misbehavior means the caretaker loses an important opportunity to teach a more appropriate behavior.
9. While hitting a child may stop a misbehavior for the moment, other methods like time out, reasoning, talking, and implementing non-violent consequences work as well or better and do not have the potential for harm that hitting children does.
10. Better alternatives exist. Children learn best through teaching, discussing, and observing adults who model responsible, caring and self-disciplined behavior.

## Family Pledge of Nonviolence

Making peace must start within ourselves and in our family. Each of us, members of the \_\_\_\_\_ family, commit ourselves as best we can to become nonviolent and peaceable people.

**To respect self and others:** To respect myself, to affirm others and to avoid uncaring criticism, hateful words, physical attacks and self-destructive behavior.

**To communicate better:** To share my feelings honestly, to look for safe ways to express my anger, and to work at solving problems peacefully.

**To listen:** To listen carefully to one another, especially those who disagree with me, and to consider others' feelings and needs rather than insist on having my own way.

**To forgive:** To apologize and make amends when I have hurt another, to forgive others, and to keep from holding grudges.

**To respect nature:** To treat the environment and all living things including our pets, with respect and care.

**To play creatively:** To select entertainment and toys that support our family's values and to avoid entertainment that makes violence look exciting, funny or acceptable.

**To be courageous:** To challenge violence in all its forms whenever I encounter it, whether at home, at school, at work, or in the community, and to stand with others who are treated unfairly.

This is our pledge. These are our goals. We will check ourselves on what we have pledged once a month on \_\_\_\_\_ for the next twelve months so that we can help each other become more peaceable people.

Pledging family members sign below:

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“Eliminating violence, one family at a time, starting with our own.”

(Families Against Violence Advocacy Network c/o Institute for Peace and Justice)

# **ARE DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT THE SAME THING? AN EXPLANATION AND SELF-TEST**

Some people think discipline is the same as punishment. They are not the same.

## **What is punishment?**

**Punishment includes the following ways of dealing with misbehavior:**

Verbal punishment – yelling, threatening, name-calling, and put-downs.

Physical punishment – spanking, pinching, twisting arms, pulling ears, etc.

Taking away favorite things.

Time-Out.

Logical Consequences. This can overlap with taking away favorite things. In this punishment the consequence relates directly to the misbehavior; for example taking a bike away for a set time when the child oversteps boundaries when riding the bike or cutting off access to video games if siblings are fighting over them.

## **What's wrong with punishments?**

Some punishments like time-out, taking away favorite things and logical consequences can be used effectively when used sparingly and appropriately. The problem with punishments is that they can lead to embarrassment, anger, humiliation, fearfulness, anxiety, and alienation from the caregiver. Spanking can lead to physical injury and having children taken away by protective services agencies. Verbal punishment can easily become abusive and lead to mental and physical health problems. Punishments are typically less effective than other forms of discipline. They do not teach children how to change what they do as discipline should do.

## **What is discipline?**

1. Discipline is helping a child develop self-control by teaching, guiding, and explaining about what was wrong with the child's behavior and what to do instead.
2. It involves setting limits and correcting misbehavior quickly and respectfully like using verbal re-direction or even a raised eyebrow.
3. It means being consistent and firm but also kind and fair.

4. It is about providing a trusting and loving atmosphere, teaching children to make good choices and being a good model for them.
5. For infants and toddlers, it means supervision and being alert to early signs of trouble, distracting them or removing them from situations, redirecting their behavior and safety-proofing their environment.
6. Discipline can also involve “restitution”. For example, if a child does something that violates the rights of a sibling, he or she should be told, “Since you purposely did xxx to your sister, you need to apologize and do something nice for her to make up for what you did. Tonight you should do her household chore in addition to your own.”
7. Reward is a more effective motivator than punishment and the most effective technique on this page! Children want to please parents and a simple “Good job!”, a sincere thanks, and “I really appreciate that” help to motivate children. It can also mean using a sticker/reward chart to recognize efforts to correct a problem.

## **Go on to the self-test.**

### Discipline? Or Punishment? SELF TEST

After each item put D (discipline) P (punishment) E (either, depending on how it's used)

1. Setting limits
2. Giving choices
3. Praise
4. Being a good role model for children
5. Hugs and smiles
6. Natural consequences
7. Loss of privilege
8. Problem solving together
9. Expressing parental disappointment
10. Redirection
11. Clear and open communication
12. Establishing a few family rules
13. Consistency
14. Structuring the environment
15. Noticing good behavior
16. Time-Out

17. Distracting the child
18. Yelling
19. Spanking
20. Teaching a child behavior we want to see

**How did you do?**

If you put D for 1,2,3,4,5,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,17, and 20 - Good for you!

If you put P for 18 and 19 – Good for you!

If you put E for 6, 7, 9, 16 – You are terrific!